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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LEADERS JOIN FORCES TO LOBBY CONGRESS FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

WASHINGTON, D.C – In a strong show of regional unity, transportation leaders from the six counties that make up the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region met with congressional representatives this week to advocate for a package of priority transportation projects totaling \$13.5 billion. The delegation also alerted transportation leaders to a looming transportation funding crisis related to proposed state funding reductions and how that could trigger the withholding of billions of additional federal transportation dollars for the region.

“We are bringing to Congress a message of consensus and unity on a series of mutually agreed upon transportation investments vital to our region,” said Brea city council member and SCAG president Bev Perry. “This trip represents an unprecedented effort in which Southern California is coming together to advocate jointly for its transportation needs. This unified approach will go a long way in helping us get these vital projects funded, from roads to mass transit service to critical goods movement improvements.”

The Southern California delegation met with congressional leaders, advocating for funding of the priority projects contained in *Destination 2030*, SCAG’s 2004 Regional Transportation Plan. Congress is currently in the process of reauthorizing TEA-21, federal transportation legislation that would authorize funding for key transportation projects in the region.

The package of projects in the Consensus Program include funding requests for:

- A new 18-mile bypass expressway in Imperial County
- Light rail service in the Eastside and Exposition Park areas of Los Angeles County
- Widening of the SR-91 Freeway in Orange and Riverside Counties
- Development of a new service line for the Metrolink system in Riverside County known as the San Jacinto Line
- Highway improvements on the I-10 and I-15 Freeways in San Bernardino County
- Widening of the SR-118 Freeway in Ventura County
- Grade separations and other road/rail improvements in Eastern Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties known as the Alameda Corridor East

“Southern California represents the world’s tenth largest economy, and the fourth largest in the U.S. after the states of California, Texas and New York. We are sending a powerful message to Congress by coming together to address our transportation challenges,” said Ron Roberts, Temecula city councilmember, SCAG first vice president and Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) chair. “Our package was not only received positively by our congressional leaders, but also by key elements of private industry with whom we will also need as partners in this effort.”

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The Southern California Consensus delegation was represented by:

- Bev Perry, Brea city council member and SCAG President
- Bea Proo, Pico Rivera city council member and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and Metrolink board member
- Bill Alexander, Rancho Cucamonga mayor, Metrolink chairman and San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) president
- Ron Roberts, Temecula city council member and RCTC chairman
- Greg Winterbottom, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) chair
- Keith Millhouse, Moorpark mayor pro-tem and Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) chairman

The group met with a number of the Southern California congressional delegation and other transportation leaders on Capitol Hill during their trip to Washington this week, including:

- Senator Dianne Feinstein
- Rep. Ernest Istook (R-OK; Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation)
- Rep. Jim Oberstar (D-MN; Ranking Member, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee)
- Rep. David Dreier (R-Arcadia; Chairman, House Rules Committee)
- Rep. Gary Miller (R-Diamond Bar; Member, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee)
- Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-Carson; Member, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee)
- Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-Redlands)
- Rep. Joe Baca (D-Ontario)
- Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Riverside)
- Laurie Saroff (Staff to Senator Barbara Boxer)

“Our members understand the importance of the priorities we have brought to them, and they have committed to working hard to ensure these vital projects get the funding support they need,” said Bea Proo, Pico Rivera city councilmember, MTA and Metrolink board member.

In addition to advocating for specific project priorities included in the Consensus Program, delegation leaders also informed federal lawmakers that proposed state transportation funding cuts could result in the withholding of up to \$8 billion for Southern California projects.

“Our region is facing some very serious transportation funding issues as the state attempts to close its budget deficit, in part, by reallocating transportation dollars,” said Bill Alexander, Rancho Cucamonga mayor, president of SANBAG and Metrolink chair. “We are fighting to ensure that Southern California doesn’t get caught in a snowball effect in which state funding reductions could trigger an even bigger loss of federal dollars that we critically need to keep our region and our economy moving.”